

Claims

1. A computerized method of providing billing information, comprising:
 - (a) receiving, over a communications network, a request for at least summary billing information that is automatically generated by the billing portal in response to an action by a billable entity associated with the billing portal;
 - (b) requesting, over the communications network in response to step (a), at least the summary billing information from a supplier of the summary billing information;
 - (c) receiving, over the communications network, at least the summary billing information from the supplier of the summary billing information; and
 - (d) transmitting, over the communications network to the billing portal, at least the summary billing information and detailed billing contact information, the detailed billing contact information for allowing the billable entity to access detailed billing information from a supplier of the detailed billing information.
2. The method of claim 1 further comprising, prior to step (a), providing software to the billing portal that in response to an action by a billable entity associated with the billing portal, exclusively directs the performance of actions of the billing portal to transmit a request for at least summary billing information associated with step (a) and to receive at least the summary billing information and the detailed billing contact information associated with step (d).
3. The method of claim 2, wherein the step of providing software comprises the steps of transmitting, over the computer network, the software to the billing portal to effect delivery and installation of the software.
4. Method of claim 3, wherein the delivery, installation and operation of the provided software is automatic with respect to other human and machine activity at the billing portal.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein the software is embodied as one contiguous portion of dynamic HTML.
6. The method of claim 4, wherein the software is embodied as one contiguous portion of JavaScript.
7. The method of claim 4, wherein the software is uncompressed and contiguously embodied in less than 80 bytes of information.
8. The method of claim 1 wherein the detailed billing contact information comprises a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) that directs access to the detailed billing information located on the Internet network.
9. The method of claim 8 wherein the detailed billing contact information comprises an encrypted Uniform Resource Locator (URL) that authenticates the identity of the billable entity accessing information addressable by the Uniform Resource Locator.
10. The method of claim 1 further comprising, prior to step (b), providing software to the supplier of summary billing information that in response to a request for summary billing information in step (b), directs the supplier to transmit over a communications network summary billing information in step (c).
11. A computerized method of providing billing information, comprising:
 - (a) receiving, over a communications network, a request for at least summary billing information automatically generated by the billing portal in response to an action by a billable entity associated with the billing portal;
 - (b) requesting, over the communications network in response to step (a), at least the summary billing information from a supplier of the summary billing information;
 - (c) receiving, over the communications network, at least the summary billing information from the supplier of the summary billing information in at least a first

one of a plurality of different data formats and translating the first data format into a predetermined data format; and

- (d) transmitting, over the communications network to the billing portal, at least the summary billing information in the predetermined data format and detailed billing contact information for allowing the billable entity to access detailed billing information from a supplier of the detailed billing information.

12. A computerized method of providing billing information, comprising:

- (a) receiving, over a communications network, a request for at least summary billing information associated with a billable entity from a billing consolidator;
- (b) requesting, over the communications network in response to step (a), at least the summary billing information from a supplier of the summary billing information;
- (c) receiving, over the communications network, at least the summary billing information from the supplier of the summary billing information in at least a first one of a plurality of different data formats and translating the first data format into a predetermined data format; and
- (d) transmitting, over the communications network to the billing consolidator, at least the information requested in step (a) in the predetermined data format.

13. The method of claim 12 further comprising, prior to step (a), providing software to the billing consolidator that directs the performance of actions of the billing consolidator to receive at least the summary billing information transmitted in step (d).

14. The method of claim 12 wherein step (a) further comprises receiving a request for detailed billing contact information associated with a billable entity.

15. The method of claim 12 wherein step (b) further comprises requesting detailed billing contact information associated with a detailed billable entity.

16. The method of claim 12 wherein step (a) further comprises requesting billing information associated with multiple billable entities and step (d) comprises transmitting billing information associated with multiple billable entities..
17. The computerized method of claim 12, where step (a) is planned by the billing consolidator to occur on a scheduled basis.
18. The computerized method of claim 14, where step (a) is planned by the billing consolidator to occur on a periodic basis.
19. A system for providing billing information, comprising:
- a host computer for communicating over a communications network with a billing portal and a supplier of summary billing information;
 - a software program including an applications programming interface enabling other software to direct behavior of the software program in a programmable manner, the software program adapted for executing on the host computer to:
 - receive a request for at least summary billing information over the communications network from the billing portal;
 - request at least the summary billing information over the communication network from the supplier of the summary billing information in response to the received request from the billing portal;
 - receive at least the summary billing information over the communications network from the supplier of the summary billing information; and
 - transmit at least the summary billing information and detailed billing contact information over the communications network to the billing portal, the detailed billing contact information allowing the billable entity to access detailed billing information as presented from a supplier of the detailed billing information.

20. The system of claim 19 wherein the behavior of the software program is directed by other software executing locally with respect to the software program.
21. The system of claim 19 wherein the behavior of the software program is directed by other software executing remotely with respect to the software program.
22. The system of claim 19 wherein the software program is adapted to be stored onto computer readable media.
23. The system of claim 19 wherein the software program is adapted to be packaged, copied and purchased separately by each of a plurality of operators of the system.
24. A method of supplying billing information to a billable entity associated with a billing portal comprising:

supplying software to the billing portal from a supplier;

the information content of the software being independent of any attribute of the billing portal except for the presence of enabled communication functionality at the billing portal to enable communication between the billing portal and the billable entity and between the billing portal and the supplier of said software;

the software interacting with the billable entity as a user interface to determine prior registration of the billable entity and to perform registration if said prior registration has not occurred;

the software communicating with the billable entity as a user interface and receiving account and billing information from the supplier that the software provides to the billable entity.